Reconsideration of this application as amended is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1-15 were pending. Claims 1-15 were rejected. In this response, no claim has been canceled. Claims 1, and 12-14 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-11, and 13-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

It is respectfully submitted that the present invention as claimed is fully supported throughout the specification and drawings. One with ordinary skill in the art would understand a context identifier is an identifier for identifying a context. Similarly, object identifier and attribute identifier are identifiers for identifying an object and an attribute. Further details supporting the present invention as claimed can be found, for example, on pages 31-33 and Figures 14A-14B and 15, etc.

Claims 1-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Chang, U.S. Patent No. 6,263,342 ("Chang") in view of admitted prior art (APA) pages 2-3. In view of the foregoing amendments, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-15 as amended include limitations that are not disclosed or suggested by the cited references. Specifically, independent claim 1 as amended recites as follows:

> 1. A method of determining a value of an attribute of an object comprising:
> attempting to determine the value by
> formulating a first query to retrieve the attribute from a properties data store based upon a combination of a current context identifier, an object identifier associated with the object, and an attribute identifier associated with the attribute,
> submitting the first query through an application programming interface (API) associated with the properties data store without having knowledge of an underlying interface to the properties data store, and

> receiving results associated with the first query; and
> if the first query is unsuccessful at locating the value, then determining the
> value by
> > formulating a second query to retrieve the attribute from the properties
> > > data store <u>based upon a combination of the object identifier and
> > > the attribute identifier without specifying the current context
> > > identifier,</u>
> > submitting the second query through the API, and
> > receiving results associated with the second query<u>, wherein the value is
> > > determined based on the object identifier and the attribute
> > > identifier by ignoring the context identifier.</u>

(Emphasis added)

Independent claim 1 includes limitations that a first query is formulated based on a current context identifier, an object identifier associated with the object, and an attribute identifier associated with the attribute and submitted to an API of a properties data store. If the first query is not returned successfully, a second query is formed based on a combination of the object identifier and the attribute identifier without specifying the current context identifier, in order to retrieve an attribute value. It is respectfully submitted that these limitations are absent from Chang.

Rather Chang is related to conventional queries. Although Chang mentioned the terms of "object" in col. 5, lines 30-40 and col. 22, lines 65-67, Chang still fails to disclose or suggest forming queries based on a combination of a current context identifier, an object identifier associated with the object, and an attribute identifier associated with the attribute as a first query stage. That is, the query is generated and the search is performed based on the object identifier, the attribute identifier, and the current context identifier (e.g., all three parameters).

Chang also fails to disclose or suggest a second stage query that is based on the object identifier and the attribute identifier without specifying the current context identifier, if the first query stage fails to produce a proper result. Although Chang mentioned a nested search,

such a search does not read on the second query stage as claimed in the present invention, particularly, based on the object identifier and the attribute identifier without specifying the current context identifier.

In order to render a claim as obvious, each and every limitations of the claim must be taught or suggested by the cited references. It is respectfully submitted that neither Chang nor the alleged admitted prior art discloses or suggests the limitations set forth above. Therefore, for the reasons discussed above, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 1 is patentable over the cited references.

Similarly, independent claims 5, 12, and 14-15 include limitations similar to those recited in claim 1. Thus, for the reasons similar to those discussed above, independent claims 5, 12, and 14-15 are patentable over the cited references.

Given that the rest of the claims depend from one of the above independent claims, at least for the reasons similar to those discussed above, it is respectfully submitted that the rest of the claims are patentable over the cited references. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.
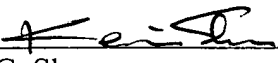
In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit the present application is now in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite or assist in the allowance of the present application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (408) 720-8300.

Please charge Deposit Account No. 02-2666 for any shortage of fees in connection with this response.

Respectfully submitted,

BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR & ZAFMAN

Date: ___10/5/2004___   _____

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